

SECOND ANNUAL INSPECTOR'S
REPORT
ON
"La Esmalta" Plantation
PROPERTY OF
**The Binghamton
Tropical Plantation Company**
Home Office, Binghamton, N. Y.
PLANTATION LOCATED ON THE PAPALOAPAM RIVER NEAR
TUXTEPEC, STATE OF OAXACA, MEXICO.
M. I. FORD, INSPECTOR.
BINGHAMTON, N. Y.
April, 1905.

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IN EXCHANGE
F. W. Putnam

SB 111
29B6

TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS:—

One year ago this month we presented to you the First Inspector's Report, and it is with increased gratification that we herewith present the Report of Mr. Mason I. Ford, the Second Inspector.

Read it. It speaks for itself. The Sugar Mill that was then "in our minds" has within the past year become a reality. A large acreage of land has been cleared and planted to RUBBER which is a permanent investment for future years and adds greatly to the value of the plantation.

The acreage of corn (The Mexican staff of life) planted during the year was also large. The Coffee, Banana and other crops were properly cared for, many new buildings were erected, miles of fence built, other improvements were made, also a beginning in that substantial and profitable industry, "Cattle Raising."

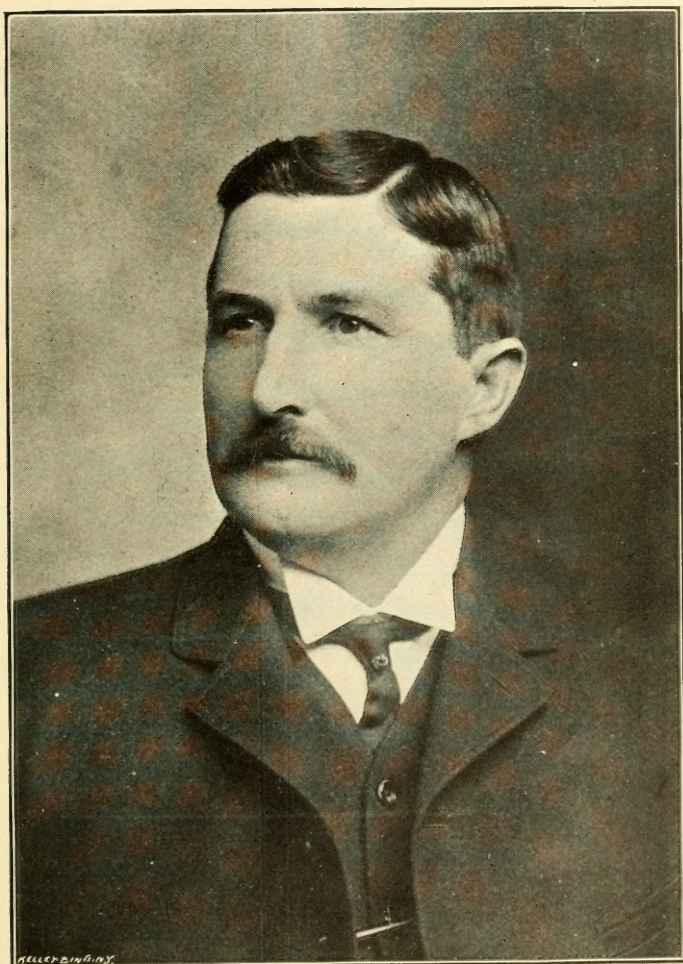
Your co-operation produced these results and we thank you for it. Assuring you that we shall do our utmost to merit its continuance we remain.

Very respectfully yours,

THE BINGHAMTON TROPICAL PLANTATION COMPANY.

April, 1905.





M. I. FORD, SECOND INSPECTOR.

REPORT
TO THE
STOCKHOLDERS
OF
Binghamton Tropical Plantation Company
BY
M. I. FORD, INSPECTOR.

To the Stockholders of the Binghamton Tropical Plantation Company :—

I beg herewith to submit my report as official inspector of the Company's Plantation and property for the past year.

My inspection was made during the week beginning Feb. 8, 1905. In addition to the examination of the Plantation of our Company, I have made such inquiry as was practicable for me to make relating to tropical agriculture in Mexico. I also visited a number of Rubber and Sugar Plantations. One of the sugar plantations was one of the largest in Mexico, their mill having the capacity of 200 tons of cane in twelve hours.

My report will contain a statement of the work done and the progress made in developing the plantation during the past year, which to me seemed very satisfactory. I also wish at this time to most heartily thank you for the confidence placed in me by electing me as your Annual Inspector.

“LA ESMALTA.”

La Esmalta the property of The Binghamton Tropical Plantation Company is situated in the District of Tuxtepec, State of Oaxaca, Mexico, on the Papaloapam River, on which river it has a frontage of nearly two miles.

It is about six miles above Tuxtepec and about twelve miles above El Hule, our nearest railroad station which is at the juncture of the Vera Cruz & Pacific Railroad and the Papaloapam River, thus affording direct communication by railroad and water with Vera Cruz, Cordova, Orazaba and Mexico City. It is 87 miles from El Hule to Cordova and 96 miles from El Hule to Vera Cruz by way of the V. C. & P. R. R. and 197 miles from Cordova to Mexico City.

I found the fertility of the soil of "La Esmalta" Plantation to be on the average much better and deeper than any other plantation that I saw while in Mexico. There is not a foot of objectionable land on the plantation. Being located near the foot hills of the mountains within the "Rubber Belt" where rains which are of special importance during the dry season, are almost certain to come every month of the year. These conditions are very essential for the rapid growth of the rubber tree. The climate and general conditions resulting from its location render it much more healthful than is the country nearer the Gulf coast.

RUBBER.

I found about 1500 rubber trees all the way from six to fifteen years old, as reported last year, which are in good condition. Last year ten of the trees that were from seven to ten years old, were tapped experimentally and 11 pounds of rubber were obtained. Those same trees were tapped again this year in the same month, January, and 15 pounds of rubber were obtained—a very satisfactory increase for one year. (Immediately after coagulation it weighed 17 lbs.)

I saw one tree tapped and two and two fifths pounds of rubber were obtained being weighed immediately after coagulation. This tree we thought was about fifteen years old.

Last June our plantation Manager had 121 acres of land planted with rubber, containing about 20,000 trees which



SNAP-SHOT OF RUBBER TREE WHILE BEING TAPPED,
MENTIONED ON OPPOSITE PAGE.

are in a good growing condition and will average as good as any that I saw of the same age. These trees were planted in rows sixteen feet apart each way. Corn was planted in the same field in rows four feet apart.

I may add that there is a great diversity of opinions in regard to the number of rubber trees to be planted to the acre. I find in visiting the different plantations and from reports I have read of others, that they plant them at distances varying from six to eighteen feet apart. As far as I have investigated I can see no reason why six feet apart is not better than eighteen.

CORN.

The field of corn that was reported by my predecessor was harvested during the month of May and yielded 350

zontlers. (A zontler is a Mexican measure for corn consisting of 400 ears.) Worth \$4.00 per zontler.

The corn planted in the rubber field gave an estimated yield of 500 zontlers, and during the last week of December another field was planted, which by pacing off we calculated to contain at least twenty-five acres. It is very even and in a fair growing condition. In one corner of the field between the rows of corn was planted about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of sugar cane.

Heretofore the cultivation of the crops has been done by manual labor.

Dr. Sheffield, the president of the Company, had seen a cultivator on a neighboring plantation that had formerly been used in cultivating tobacco. He suggested to the Manager that he borrow it. He did so and we made a harness for one of the mules and tried cultivating the corn. It worked so successfully that our president when in Mexico City bought two new cultivators to be used for the next crop of corn which will be planted in May.

Corn is a valuable product, being the chief article of food for the natives, there is always a good demand for it.

The corn sells on the plantation at the rate of \$1.00 per 100 ears for the select ears not husked. Shelled corn was selling in Tuxtepec at wholesale for \$70.00 per long ton.

The cost of taking shelled corn to Tuxtepec was less than seven cents per 100 pounds in two-ton lots. Larger amounts would be less proportionately. (These prices are in Mexican money.)

I would expect a much larger yield when cultivated in a modern way.

C O F F E E .

I think as reported for 1904 that there are 14,000 Coffee trees on the plantation, and judge their condition to

be fine. The last crop was picked in November and December and was still there on the plantation. There were 52 large sacks holding about 100 pound each, making something over 5000 pounds in all. It will be shipped before the end of the dry season.



PULPING COFFEE ON "LA ESMALTA."

In the Coffee Orchard are about 600 Cacao (Cocoa) trees, that are well loaded with pods, on an average of 12 pods to a tree and are worth ten cents per pod. In February there were planted 200 more Cacao trees between the house and the river.

Beans or seeds are taken from the pods of the Cacao trees from which Chocolate, and breakfast Cocoa are manufactured.

A cacao orchard well attended should yield very large returns. The seeds retail in Mexico from 75 cents to \$1.00 per pound, Mexican money.

SUGAR CANE.

There is a field of fifty acres in which the cane is twice as large as any other that I saw, and I visited a plantation where they said that they had 2000 acres of it.

About four acres had been made into sugar. The mill is working very nicely and improving every day without expensive help, men that have learned the making of sugar in this mill, and the quality of the sugar is as good as any made in that locality.

Our Manager thinks he has a market for it up the river. We are now getting 6 and 7 cents per pound for it. Considerable had been sold and there was about \$1000 worth in the dry house. I should think that it will take at least three months to finish grinding the cane. The cane grows up from the roots without replanting for a number of years, which makes it very desirable land for producing sugar cane.

PINE APPLES.

There are 1000 pine apple plants that were set out last June. They are of the celebrated variety for which Tezonapa is noted, and the seedlings were obtained from Lagoona Chica Plantation near that place. It requires two years for pine apples to produce the first crop after which they bear fruit each year.

BANANAS.

There are about five acres of bananas which are of the best varieties and in a fine growing condition. The grade of fruit produced is extra fine. They bring about the same price as corn, i. e. one cent each.

There is a good demand for them at Tuxtepec. While I was on the plantation a man came up from Tuxtepec in a canoe for a load of them. This orchard or "platinal" as they call it, has bananas ripening all the year round.

STOCK.

I found on our plantation 95 head of cattle consisting of 30 steers, 37 cows, and 28 two-year-olds; also 33 calves that came with the cows without cost and three more that have come since the cows were bought, which was the last of January.

Four and one-half pairs of oxen. They are very fine, are excellent workers and are in good condition.

There are five horses for riding, two colts about a year old, two pack mules and nine pigs.

POULTRY.

There are fifty hens, three turkeys three old ducks and fourteen young ones. The total cost of this live stock was \$1669.83.

TOOLS.

Blacksmith, carpenter and pipe fitting tools, ropes and tackles that cost in New York \$516. Seven ox carts costing \$55. each at the Factory, total of \$385. They were shipped to the plantation with the sugar machinery. One corn sheller \$20, one Coffee Pulper \$175, three sets of scales \$90, one sewing machine \$75, six saddles \$75, one boat \$112.50 and an estimated value of other tools not herein mentioned about \$200. Total \$1648.50.

The estimated value of corn in the crib \$800 and shelled corn ready for the market \$70.

L. of C.



Papaloapam River in front of La Esmalta. The plantation boat loaded with two tons of Corn on its way to Tuxtepec—Mr. Ford and Mr. Shelley in foreground.

TRANSPORTATION.

The plantation owns a boat of about two tons capacity which is used in carrying produce to market and also for bringing materials, provisions, &c., and for carrying sand from up the River where we have a fine bed of excellent quality on the River bank.

There is also an excellent quality of lime stone near the Manager's house. A lime-kiln has been built which will make all of the lime needed on the plantation. This will effect quite a saving for considerable lime is used in various ways and it is quite expensive if you have to have it shipped in.

FISH.

I saw six fish that had been taken from the river not far from the house that weighed 31 pounds. The largest one weighed 7 4-5 pounds. It is the intention of our manager to get a net and catch and dry them to sell from the plantation store to the natives and workmen.



SNAP-SHOT OF THE SIX FISH AND THE WORKMAN THAT CAUGHT THEM.

FENCING.

New barbed wire amounting to \$78.75 has been bought and new fencing has been built and old fencing rebuilt that we estimated to make a total of about six miles.

In building fence those kinds of wood have been selected for posts that take root and then they become live trees and make a fence that will last a life time.

There is considerable more fence that needs rebuilding.

We are fortunate in being located where there is an abundance of good labor. I was agreeably surprised at the ability and faithfulness of the workmen on the plantation.

The common field hand is paid from seventy-five cents to one dollar and twenty-five cents per day. (Equal to 35 cents to 62 cents U. S. Money.) They board themselves, buying most of their supplies at our Plantation Store.

During the year ending February 1, 1905, the entire cost of labor including the construction of the sugar-mill and Manager's salary was \$6,257.27.

It is the intention to adopt modern methods as fast as practicable, thereby reducing the cost of running the plantation to the minimum.



MANAGER'S RESIDENCE, STORE, ETC.

BUILDINGS.

I found the buildings in excellent shape and condition. One Ranch House of thirteen rooms, one story high, porches on both sides running the full length with a galvanized iron roof. It is sided, partitioned and ceiled with dressed and matched Southern pine. The flooring is of the same material. It cost when built \$1500.00.

Ten new palm-roofed houses which have been built since the last report at a cost of about \$50.00 each. These

buildings are all made from material taken from the plantation. There are four old houses that were on the place when bought. Last year's report gave eleven. Of the other seven, one burned, two fell down and the rest were taken down, as they were old, the posts were decayed, the roofs were full of insects and their location was on ground where water would stand during the wet season. The new houses were built on higher ground.

There is one horse stable, shed, and a corn house that cost to build them all about \$200.00.

The life of these palm-roofed buildings is said to be about ten years. Those built on our plantation are of much better quality than many that are built in that locality.



SUGAR MILL IN OPERATION, SUGAR CANE, WORKMEN
AND CARTS.

SUGAR PLANT AND BUILDINGS.

The main building is 80 feet 8 inches long, by 44 feet 8 inches wide on the end where the engine, crusher and defecators are located, 54 feet 8 inches on the other end where the boiler and evaporators are. It is boarded and battoned all around with Southern pine lumber, has a galvanized iron roof, concrete foundations for the whole mill and for the machinery, and a fine cement floor.

It contains a 50-horse power boiler with a bagasse burning furnace, one 24-horse power engine for running the mill and the cane and the bagasse carriers, one 6-horse power engine for running the blower for the bagasse burner and the evaporators, three steam pumps, two defecators and two "Cooks" patent copper evaporators. All new.

The mill is a No. 5 "Niles" manufactured by the Blymyer Iron Works Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Water is obtained from a well about 30 feet deep located in the center of the building. From this well it is pumped into a cypress tank that is above the mill, and is conducted wherever needed with pipes and hose. One store-house for the sugar two stories high covered with boards and then recovered with galvanized iron to make it air tight. A fire is kept in this building during damp weather to keep the sugar in good condition. The repair shop and tool room is also in this building.

There are two long sheds built for working and storing building material. The cost of this plant, buildings and machinery, was about \$20,000.00. I will say that whatever has been built in the line of buildings and machinery has been well built.

I would also state that the Manager was building a brick oven for baking bread for which there is a good demand and it will be sold from the plantation store.

SUMMARY.

There is now on the plantation :

121 Acres of Rubber, planted last June.

15 Acres (estimated) Rubber that was on the plantation when bought.

52 Acres of sugar cane.

25 Acres of corn.

20 Acres in the Coffee Orchard, (estimated) (trees bearing.)

5 Acres of Bananas.

300 Acres of pasture, and the balance of the plantation is covered with a thick tropical growth.

1000 Pine Apple plants.

800 Cacao trees (Cocoa,) 600 bearing.

Considerable of wild growth such as brush, &c., has grown up in the pastures, and it will be necessary to clean them up before we can expect very large returns from fattening cattle for the market.

It is an ideal cattle country. There being no frost, grass grows continually and cattle run in the pastures throughout the entire year. There are native kinds of grass that are excellent for fattening purposes. The kind called "Para" is grown by cattle men to the greatest extent. Of this kind there is very little on the plantation, and it is the intention to plant out a large field of it as soon as practicable, for the purpose of fattening cattle for the market.

PLANTATION MANAGER.

Dr. J. C. Orcutt's term of service expired with Nov. 30, 1904, and the president of the Company engaged Mr. John W. Shelley as his successor.

Mr. Shelley's native state is Kentucky. He has been in Mexico three years. He comes to us with the highest commendations of his previous employers, and we trust that he will do equally as well for us. He is a gentleman in every respect and a splendid book-keeper.

I think his methods of classifying the different departments of the work are excellent and he is a great favorite with the natives.

Mrs. Shelley is a lady in every sense of the word. She is the proud possessor of a medal won at school and presented to her from the hands of President Diaz. She speaks both the Spanish and English languages and is a great help, particularly in the store.

Mr. Shelley rings the plantation bell at 4:45 o'clock for the workmen to get their breakfast, and again at 5:45 o'clock to commence work. At 11 o'clock the bell is sounded for dinner, at 12 o'clock to commence work in the afternoon and again at 6 o'clock the ending of their days work.

STORE.

I wish to make mention of our Plantation Store which I think our new manager will succeed in making a very profitable business. The sales for January were \$375.41. The President was told by a resident of Tuxtepec, a well informed man thoroughly acquainted with that section of country, that one fifth of the trade of Tuxtepec passed by our door, either by the road or the River, and it is the intention to try to develop commercially in this direction.

At present the store is open only three hours a day, one hour in the morning, from 11 to 12 and from 6 to 7 in the afternoon.

Feb. 1, 1905, there was cash in the Bank of London & Mexico, Mexico City, \$1464.90 and on the Plantation \$940.

There had been paid into this bank from the Binghamton Office a total of \$39,462.28.

The amounts given in this report when not otherwise mentioned (excepting the store sales) are in U. S. Money. The rate of exchange when I was in Mexico City was \$2.01½.

I wish also to state that while in Mexico City, our President paid the last indebtedness against our plantation, leaving our property free and clear. If I have omitted anything upon which information is desired I will be pleased to have you call on me personally or by letter. Again I thank you. Hoping that this report will be satisfactory I remain,

Yours truly,
M. I. FORD,
Inspector.



The Binghamton Tropical Plantation Company.

29 Arthur St., Binghamton, N. Y.

(INCORPORATED.)

OFFICERS:

J. W. SHEFFIELD, President and General Manager,
29 Arthur St., Binghamton, N. Y.

JOHN HULL, Jr., (of Hull, Grummond & Co.) Vice-President,
Cor. Water & Henry Sts., Binghamton, N. Y.

W. S. C. SMITH, Secretary,
44 Henry St., Binghamton, N. Y.

FRED H. HASKINS, (of Hills, McLean & Haskins,) Treasurer,
Cor. Chenango & Court Sts., Binghamton, N. Y.